

PATENT

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MULTI-PLAY GAME OF CHANCE

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RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This patent application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/475,908, filed June 5, 2003, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0002] The present invention relates to games of chance. In particular, the present invention provides expanded features to games of chance.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Examples of games of chance include future draw lottery games, instant scratch off games and the like. Future draw lottery games permit players to pick or select numbers that may be drawn in the future by a random number selection method. Numbers may be selected randomly by mechanical methods such as selection of items such as balls bearing numeric designations and/or electronic means such as through a random number generator, for example. If the selected numbers are drawn, the player may be awarded a prize. The amount of the prizes may be based on, for example, the odds of winning and/or other criteria.

[0004] In future draw games, a player may pick, for example, three numbers for a three number drawing or a player may select 4 numbers for a 4 number drawing and so on. The player may select to play the numbers as straight (i.e., exact order) or box (i.e., any order) or a combination thereof. For example, if a player chooses the straight option, a player may win if the numbers she selects in a three number drawing are drawn in the same order. However, if the player selects to play the box option, a player may win if the numbers she selects in a three number drawing are drawn in any order. Of course, the box option may

offer a higher chance of winning but the value of the prizes awarded may be less. Nevertheless, the increased chances of winning may help to maintain player interest and continued play.

[0005] Accordingly, there is a need in the art for increased features in games of chance where players are offered more flexibility and an increased opportunity to win prizes.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0006] Embodiments of the present invention are illustrated by way of example, and not limitation, in the accompanying figures in which like references denote similar elements, and in which:

[0007] FIG. 1 is an interface that may facilitate play in a multi-featured game of chance in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

[0008] FIG. 2 is a diagrammatic representation of a lottery ticket in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention;

[0009] FIG. 3 is a table listing exemplary features of a game of chance in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

[0010] FIG. 4 illustrates features of the multi-featured game of chance in accordance with embodiments of the present invention;

[0011] FIG. 5 illustrates features of the multi-featured game of chance in accordance with embodiments of the present invention;

[0012] FIG. 6 is flowchart in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention;

[0013] FIG. 7 is a system block diagram in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention; and

[0014]FIG. 8 is flowchart in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0015]Embodiments of the present invention may provide increased features, flexibility of play, and/or increased opportunities to win in games of chance. Embodiments of the present invention provide a single game in which the players may be offered different play options and/or additional opportunities to win prizes. Embodiments of the invention may be presented as quick draw games that may be drawn several times a day. With increased opportunities for players to win prizes, embodiments of the present invention may increase value of the prizes, player interest, frequency of play, and thus, increasing revenues for some sponsors and/or operators.

[0016]Embodiments of the present invention may find application in games of chance such as future-draw games in which a player selects numbers for a game that are to be drawn in the future. Although, the discussion herein may refer to pick three games (i.e., a future draw games in which three numbers may be drawn) and/or pick four games (i.e., a future draw games in which four numbers may be drawn), it is recognized that embodiments of the present invention may be applied to other types of future draw games and/or other types of games of chance.

[0017]FIG. 1 shows an interface 100 that may be used to play a game of chance in accordance with embodiments of the present invention. Interface 100 may be used to select, for example, the type of one or more games to play, the numbers to play and/or the corresponding wager (e.g., amount to bet). The interface 100 may be embodied in a paper document, a smart card, in a web site, or any other physical and/or electronic medium. The interface 100 may be accessible via a PDA (personal digital assistance), a personal computer (PC), a television and/or any other device. For example, a user may access interface 100 over the Internet, e-mail and/or via regular mail. A player may play

selected numbers using a periodic subscription such as an hourly, daily, weekly, monthly and/or any other type of subscription.

[0018]In accordance with embodiment of the present invention, interface 100 may include section 110, 120 and/or 130. As shown in FIG. 1, for example, section 110 may be used by the player to select the type for game to be played. For example, a player may chose a three (3) digit game, a two (2) digit game, and/or a one (1) digit game by marking the corresponding selection. It is recognized that section 110 may include additional types of games such as four digit games, five digit games, six digit games, etc. and or any combination thereof.

[0019]Although, only a single selection is shown, a player may select multiple games to be played, in accordance with embodiments of the present invention. For example, a player may select a three digit game as well as a two digit game to be played by making multiple selection. However, if multiple games are played, the cost per play may be increased, the bet price may increase and/or the prize awarded may decrease in value. This may be done to offset the additional chances of winning a prize. In this example, the three digit selection may be played in "any order" (to be described below in more detail).

[0020]As further shown in FIG. 1, section 120 may be used to select the numbers to be played in the type of game chosen in section 110. As shown, a player may select a "quick-pick" option in which the numbers may be randomly chosen for the player automatically or the player may select, for example, three number ranging from 0 to 9. It is recognized that additional columns may be added if other types of games such a as four digit or five digit games are played. In this example, the player or customer may play the numbers "384" by selecting the appropriate boxes, as shown in FIG. 1.

[0021]In accordance with embodiments of the present invention, section 130 may be used to select the wager amount (e.g., the bet price). The bet price may or may not be the cost of the lottery ticket that the player may purchase.

For example, the cost of the lottery ticket may include an additional fee that may be charged to play the particular game of chance. The fee may increase incrementally as multiple games are played using a single ticket.

[0022] FIG. 2 illustrates an example lottery ticket 200 that may be generated in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. It is recognized that lottery ticket 200 is given by way of example only and that a lottery ticket can be configured in any number of different ways. It is recognized that a lottery ticket may be embodied in a paper document, a smart card, or any other physical and/or electronic embodiment. For example, a player may obtain a lottery ticket and/or play the game over the Internet, e-mail and/or via regular mail. A player may play selected numbers using a periodic subscription such as an hourly, daily, weekly, monthly and/or any other type of subscription. The example lottery ticket 200 illustrated in FIG. 2 may be located on a substrate, e.g., a printable substrate such as paper, card stock, plastic, or various laminates. Information may be found on both sides of the example lottery ticket.

[0023] Although the discussion herein relates to a future draw pooled game, it is recognized that embodiments of the present invention may be applied to other types of games of chance. As is known, in a future draw pooled game, a lottery ticket may represent a chance in a drawing to be held at some later time for a pooled prize or prizes.

[0024] In an embodiment of the present invention, the lottery ticket 200 may include a non-play area 220 and a play area 222. It is recognized that the non-play and play areas are used herein for description purposes only and are not limiting or exclusive. Information shown on the ticket and/or described herein may be located anywhere on the ticket and is not limited to be located in a play or non-play area.

[0025] In this example, the non-play area 220 may include, for example, information not directly involved in the play of the game provided on the ticket. Located on the non-play area may be instructions for playing the extended play

game or for the use and/or redemption of the ticket and/or information 212 related to the prize. The non-play area 222 may also include the name of the game such as "Global Games" 280 and/or the name such as "XYZ Lottery" 216 of, for example, one or more jurisdictions in which the lottery is played and/or the provider of the game such as a state lottery.

[0026] In embodiments of the present invention, the non-play area 220 may include a card identifier 214 that may identify the ticket. The identifier 214 may also identify game and/or type of ticket or another number may be used for such identification. The identifier 214 may include other information that may be used for authentication purposes. A machine-readable version 226 representing the numeric code of the card identifier 214 may also be included in the ticket 200. The machine-readable version 226 may be a bar code, e.g., a stacked linear bar code or two-dimensional bar code. A standard 2 of 5 or other standard bar code may be employed. It will be appreciated that other forms of machine-readable information may be included on the ticket, in place of the bar codes, e.g., magnetic strips or smart card capability.

[0027] In embodiments of the present invention, the machine-readable version 226 may be read via a scanner or the like and the information may be used to verify, for example, whether the ticket 200 is authentic and/or to determine whether the ticket is a winning ticket. It is recognized that the information may be entered manually via keyboard, touch screen, etc.

[0028] The lottery ticket 200 may also include logos or advertising information. The lottery ticket may include other rules, legal disclaimers, etc. that may be located on the front and/or the back of the lottery ticket. The lottery ticket 200 may also include date/time information 218 that may relate to the date when the ticket 200 is valid and/or the time of the drawing to which the ticket 200 pertains.

[0029] The play area 222 may include game information such as numbers that may be selected and/or played for a particular drawing and/or the type of game.

For example, play area 222 may indicate whether the player chooses to play the selected numbers "in order" or in "any order." If the player chooses the multiple games in a single play, the play area 222 may include additional numbers.

[0030]As indicated above, the drawing may be a pick three (3) drawing, pick four (4) drawing, pick five (5), and/or another type of drawing. In this example, play area 222 may include pick three numbers such as X1, X2 and X3 that may be printed on the ticket, for example. It is recognized that X1, X2 and/or X3 may be numerical integers from 0 to 9. Additionally or optionally, X1, X2, X3 may be other numbers, alphabet characters, pictures, other representations and/or any combination thereof. For purposes of explanation, X1 may represent a number in the first position, X2 may represent a number in the second position and X3 may represent a number in the third position, for example.

[0031]In embodiments of the present invention, when numbers for the lottery to which the ticket pertains are drawn, a player may win a prize if, for example, the numbers X1, X2, X3 are drawn in the same order as they appear in the play area 222, for example. Thus, if the numbers are drawn in the position the numbers appear on the ticket, a prize may be awarded. If there is a match "in order," the player may cash in the ticket for the associated winning prize. In embodiments of the present invention, the player can win a prize if the numbers are drawn based on the option chosen.

[0032]For example, a player may win a prize if the three numbers X1, X2 and X3 are drawn in any order, if the "any order" option was selected. Thus, for example, if the numbers X2, X3 and X1 are drawn, in that order, the player can win a prize if she selected or played the numbers X1, X2 and X3, for example, if the "any order" option was selected. Accordingly, the player may be awarded a prize if the selected numbers are drawn in any order or any position.

[0033] FIG. 3 shows a table 300 in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. Embodiments of the present invention may provide a multi-featured game that may provide multiple options to play and/or win a prize from a single pool. Table 300 illustrates the increased features that may be included in the multi-featured game ticket that may be provided, for example, in a pick 3 game, in accordance with embodiments of the present invention. In table 300, column 310 lists examples of the "Match Options" or play options that a player may have when playing a multi-featured game of chance, for example, in accordance with embodiments of the present invention. Column 320 may include the "Odds of Winning," for the corresponding type of game played and columns 330-370 may include an estimated prize associated with each bet or amount wagered.

[0034] It is recognized that the information given in table 300 is given by way of example only and should be construed as limiting in any way. It is recognized that the values such as match options 310, odds of winning 330, prize awarded, etc., provided in the table 300, are provided by way of example only for a pick 3 game. These values may vary for different games such as a pick four, pick five and/or other types of games. It is recognized that table 300 may include other information such as pay out percentages and/or any other information.

[0035] In an embodiment of the present invention, a player may select a one digit game, a two digit game and/or a three digit game as shown in section 110 of interface 100. If the three digit game is chosen, a player may further select an "in order" option, or an "any order" option, in accordance with embodiments of the present invention.

[0036] Referring now to FIG. 4, an explanation will be provided for the various options and corresponding ways to win, in accordance with embodiments of the present invention. For example, with reference to box 410, if the number "384" for example is played with the "in order" option selected, as referred to by 413, a player may win a prize if the exact three digits are drawn in order as shown in

418. Referring to box 420, if a player plays the number "388" with the "any order option" as referenced by 423, a prize may be awarded if the numbers shown in the list presented in box 428 are drawn. In this case, out of the three numbers selected, where two of the numbers are the same, these numbers can occur in any order and/or in any position, as shown in the list 428. Referring to box 430, if a player plays the number "384" with the "any order option" as referenced by 433, a prize may be awarded if the numbers shown in the list presented in box 438 are drawn. In this case, the numbers can appear in any position and/or in any order as shown in the list 438. Based on the amount wagered and the option chosen, a corresponding price can be determined from columns 330-370 of table 300.

[0037]In embodiments of the present invention, there may be two play options, for example, the "in order" and/or "any order" play options. There may be two prize categories such as "three way" and "six way." The prize category may be determined based on the numbers picked by the player. For example, if all the three numbers picked by the player are unique, then the prize category is "six way" since there are six ways to win. If, however, a number is duplicated, then the prize category is "three ways" since there are only three ways to win.

[0038]Referring to FIG. 5, the two digit and one digit games will now be described, in accordance with embodiments of the present invention. If the player plays the two digit "in order" game, the player can win a prize if the selected two digits are drawn in the same order. If, as shown in box 510, a player selects the numbers 3 and 4 as referenced by 510, the player can win a corresponding prize if the same numbers are drawn in order as shown in 515. Based on the amount wagered and the option chosen, a corresponding price can be determined from columns 330-370 of table 300.

[0039]In accordance with embodiments of the present invention, box 520 illustrates how a player can win prizes playing a one digit and/or two digit any order game. If a player plays the one digit "any order" game, the player can win

a prize if the selected digit is drawn in any position. If, as shown in box 523, a player selects the number 4 as referenced by 524, the player can win a corresponding prize if the same number is drawn in any location as shown in list 525. If a player plays the two digit "any order" game, the player can win a prize if the selected digits are drawn in any order. If, as shown in box 527, a player selects the numbers 3 and 4 as referenced by 526, the player can win a corresponding prize if the same numbers are drawn in any order as shown in list 528. Similar to the above, based on the amount wagered and the option chosen, a corresponding price can be determined from columns 330-370 of table 300.

[0040] In embodiments of the present invention, a player may choose to play a multi-play game in which the player can pick, for example, three numbers and may win a prize under any of the various options described above. For example, if the player selects three digits and selects the multi-play option, the player can win a prize if the three digits are drawn in order or in any order. If the player is unsuccessful under the three digit option, the player may still win a prize if two of the three digits selected by the player are drawn in order or in any order, or if one of the three digits selected is drawn in any order. It is recognized that an additional fee may be incurred to play the multi-play game and/or the corresponding prizes awarded for the multi-play option may be decreased, in accordance with embodiments of the present invention.

[0041] Embodiments of the present invention may provide a multi-featured game that may include additional features, more opportunities to play, increased values of prizes awarded and/or increased chances for players to win prizes. In embodiments of the present invention, a player may be able to play multiple games in a single ticket and/or play. For example, a multi-featured pick three game may include a pick three, pick two and/or pick one game all in a single game. In another example, a multi-featured pick four game may include a pick four, a pick three, a pick two, and/or a pick one game all rolled into a single game. Embodiments of the present invention may be applied to other

types of games. In embodiments of the present invention, multiple prizes may be awarded for a single set of numbers selected in a multi-play option game.

[0042]As described above, a player may purchase a multi-play option for an additional fee when purchasing her game ticket. Thus, the payer may be given additional options to win prizes for a fee as described herein. It is also recognized that the multi-play option may be included with the ticket at no additional cost.

[0043]Because of the increased opportunities to win and/or play, embodiments of the present invention may be highly effective as quick draw game that may be drawn every hour, every half-hour, and/or several times in an hour such as a monitor game. It is recognized that drawings may be held using mechanical methods such as selection of ping-pong balls bearing numeric designations. Additionally and/or optionally, electronic means such as random number generators maybe used to select winning numbers. It is recognized that winning numbers may be selected by a local stand alone device and/or may be selected at a central location that may be broadcast using broadcast signals, Internet, and/or any other means of communications.

[0044]FIG. 6 is a flow chart illustrating a method in accordance with embodiments of the present invention. FIG. 7 is an exemplary block diagram of a multi-featured lottery system 700 in which embodiments of the present invention may find application. As shown in FIG. 7, a plurality of clients, for example, clients 761 to 763 may be coupled to a transit network 790. The system may further include one or more multi-featured lottery or game management centers 711 and database 731 containing multi-featured data such as data included in, for example, table 300. It is recognized that additional clients, databases, management centers, servers and/or other components or devices may be included in embodiments of the present invention.

[0045]In embodiments of the present invention, clients 761 to 763 may be any type of public or private entities. For example, clients 761 to 763 may be game

ticket retailers, vendors, grocery stores, game vending machines, monitors or televisions and/or any other entity or place where lottery tickets may be purchased and/or to where lottery drawings may be broadcast. Clients 761 to 763 may also be personal computers or other devices that may be used to purchase game tickets via, for example, the Internet.

[0046] Clients 761 to 763 may include for example scanners such as barcode scanners or other types of input devices such as keyboards that may be used to enter and/or read data from the tickets. It is recognized that clients 761 to 763 may have other equipment or components to facilitate communications with, for example, management center 711 and/or other clients 761 to 763 over the transit network. It is recognized that if a client 762, for example, is a lottery ticket vendor, the client 762 may have a lottery ticket machine that may be used to vend tickets, read information from the lottery tickets and/or may communicate over the network 790. It is recognized that embodiments of the invention may be incorporated within such lottery ticket machine or other client device.

[0047] In embodiments of the present invention, database 731 may include data associated with the multi-feature game. Such data may include the plurality of multi-featured options provided for each type of game, associated prizes, odds, instructions of play, rules, percentage pay outs, multi-play information and/or any other data associated with the gaming method in accordance with embodiments of the information. Database 731 may also include numbers from previous drawings and/or other information and/or statistics. Example of such information stored in database 731 is shown in the table 300, shown in FIG. 1. In some cases, clients may be able retrieve data directly from the database 731. The management center 711 may include one or more servers to process and/or update data stored in the database 731. Although a single database is shown, additional databases may be included in system 700.

[0048] It is recognized that the databases as described herein such as the authentication databases or any other databases may be configured as relational databases, flat files, hierarchical databases, transactional systems, object oriented databases and/or any other type of configuration.

[0049] Transit network 790 may be a communications network that may include, for example, a public switched telephone network (PSTN), an Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN), a cellular network, a digital mobile network, a Personal Communication Systems (PCS) network, an Internet, an intranet, a signaling system 7 (SS7) network, a local area network (LAN), a satellite network, an advance intelligent network (AIN), any suitable digital or analog network, a broadband network such as a cable network, any other suitable national and/or international communications network or any suitable combination thereof. It is recognized that embodiments of the present invention may utilize magnetic or optical media (e.g., hard drives, tapes, disks, etc.) to store and/or transmit data. A retailer or client may process a transaction offline and may later send the information via a disk, tape, or other transmission media to an authentication center for authentication.

[0050] In embodiments of the present invention, a client such as client 761 may issue a ticket for a N-number game of chance to a player. The N-number game of chance may be a pick three, pick four, pick five, etc. future game and/or another type of game. The game may be a multi-feature game of chance, in accordance with embodiments of the present invention. If available, the player may choose or may be give the multi-play option that may be indicated on the ticket. A drawing to select the winning numbers may be held at a future time. The issued ticket may be received at one of the clients for redemption. Information may be read manually and/or automatically and the ticket may be processed in accordance with embodiments of the present invention to determine whether the ticket is a winning ticket and the value of a corresponding prize to be awarded for the winning ticket. The information may

be processed at the management center 711, at the client's location 761 to 763 and/or combination of both.

[0051] It is recognized that the management center 711 and/or clients 761 to 763 may be equipped with the appropriate hardware and/or software to process methods in accordance with embodiments of the present invention. For example, this may include computers, servers, communication devices, scanners and/or other devices and/or software programs may be used to process game data as described herein.

[0052] In embodiments of the present invention, the system may determine if the game is a multi-featured game. Assuming that the multi-feature game was played, the flow chart shown in FIG. 6 illustrates an exemplary processing method that may be used to determine whether the issued ticket is a winning ticket based on the drawing and/or an associated prize for the winning ticket. As shown in 605, it may be determined whether a 3 digit game was chosen. If a three digit game was chosen, then it may be determined whether the player choose an "in order" option and whether the selected three digit numbers were drawn, as shown in 607. If the "in order" option was chosen by the player and the selected numbers were drawn in order, then the ticket may be declared as a winning ticket and a corresponding prize may be awarded, as shown in 630. If the "in order" option was not chosen, it may be determined whether the "any order" option was chosen and whether selected numbers were drawn in any order, as shown in 609. In this case, the prize category may be determined based on the numbers picked by the player. For example, if all the three numbers picked by the player are unique, then the prize category is "six way" since there are six ways to win. If, however, a number is duplicated, then the prize category is "three ways" since there are only three ways to win.

[0053] If the "any order" option was chosen by the player and the selected numbers were drawn in any order, then the ticket may be declared as a winning ticket and a corresponding prize may be awarded, as shown in 630. On the

other hand, if the "any order" option was chosen, but the selected numbers were not drawn, the process may end, as shown in 609.

[0054] In accordance with embodiments of the present invention, if the 3 digit game was not chosen, it may be determined whether the two digit game was chosen, as shown in 615. If a two digit game was chosen, then it may be determined whether the player choose an "in order" option and whether the selected two digit numbers were drawn, as shown in 617. If the "in order" option was chosen by the player and the selected numbers were drawn in order, then the ticket may be declared as a winning ticket and a corresponding prize may be awarded, as shown in 640. If the "in order" option was not chosen, it may be determined whether the "any order" option was chosen and whether selected numbers were drawn in any order, as shown in 619. If the "any order" option was chosen by the player and the selected numbers were drawn in any order, then the ticket may be declared as a winning ticket and a corresponding prize may be awarded, as shown in 640. On the other hand, if the "any order" option was chosen, but the selected numbers were not drawn, the process may end, as shown in 619.

[0055] In accordance with embodiments of the present invention, if the 2 digit game was not chosen, it may be determined whether the ticket is a winning ticket if the one digit game was chosen, as shown in 625. If the one digit game was chosen, then if the selected is drawn, then the ticket may be declared as a winning ticket and a corresponding prize may be awarded, as shown in 627 and 650. On the other hand, if the selected number was not drawn, the process may end, as shown in 627.

[0056] In embodiments of the present invention, the player may select a multi-play option for the multi-featured game of chance. Assuming that the multi-play option is selected by the player, the flow chart shown in FIG. 8 illustrates an exemplary processing method that may be used to determine whether the issued ticket is a winning ticket based on the drawing and/or an associated

prize for the winning ticket. As shown in 805, it may be determined whether at least one number drawn is selected on the ticket. If at least one number drawn is selected on the ticket, the ticket may be declared as a winning ticket as shown in 806. If not, the process may end and no prize may be awarded. The winning multi-play ticket may be redeemed for a corresponding prize.

[0057] In accordance with embodiments of the present invention, it may be determined whether at least two numbers drawn are selected on the issued ticket, as shown in 810. If at least two numbers drawn are selected on the issued ticket, the ticket may be declared as a winning ticket, as shown in 811. The winning multi-play ticket may be redeemed for a corresponding prize.

[0058] In accordance with embodiments of the present invention, it may be determined whether at least two numbers drawn in the N-number game of chance match the position as corresponding matching numbers selected on the issued ticket, as shown in 820. If at least at least two numbers drawn in the N-number game of chance match the position as corresponding matching numbers selected on the issued ticket, the ticket may be declared as a winning ticket, as shown in 821. The winning multi-play ticket may be redeemed for a corresponding prize.

[0059] In embodiments of the present invention, it may be determined if at least two numbers drawn are the same and if the drawn numbers appear on the issued ticket. If so, the ticket may be declared as a winning ticket. The winning multi-play ticket may be redeemed for a corresponding prize.

[0060] Embodiments of the present invention may provide a multi-feature game that may include additional features, more opportunities to play, increased values of prizes awarded and/or increased chances for players to win prizes. In embodiments of the present invention, a player may have the option of playing multiple games in a single ticket and/or play.

[0061] Several embodiments of the present invention are specifically illustrated and/or described herein. However, it will be appreciated that modifications and variations of the present invention are covered by the above teachings and within the purview of the appended claims without departing from the spirit and intended scope of the invention. The specification and drawings are accordingly to be regarded in an illustrative rather than restrictive sense.